The Industry Reports to the Government on Books in World Rehabilitation

► A memorandum, Books In World Rehabilitation, has been issued by the American book publishing industry for use by the Congress of the United States, the Department of State, the Department of the Army and the Department of Commerce. This report to the American government, which will be available in pamphlet form by May 8, was prepared under the supervision of Charles Griffith, chairman of the joint committee representing the three book publishing organizations, and has been approved by such outstanding educators as Harold W. Dodds, president of Princeton University; Charles Seymour, president of Yale University; Paul R. Hanna, professor of education at Stanford University; and Isaiah Bowman, president of Johns Hopkins University.

Certain portions of the report, mainly statistical matter and a membership listing of the 3 sponsoring organizations, have been omitted—as have the four appendices which include Department of Commerce book export figures, an enumeration of the trade restrictions on American books existing in other countries and the total dollar allocations made available in these countries for the purchase of these books. The text of the abridged report follows:

BOOKS IN WORLD REHABILITATION

The American Textbook Publishers Institute, representing 46 publishers primarily in the educational field; the American Book Publishers Council, representing 80 educational and general publishers; and the Association of American University Presses,* representing the publishing units of 28 institutions of higher learning, have prepared this memorandum to supply a statement of facts regarding the place of American books in world rehabilitation.

The United States is embarked on a policy of helping the nations of the world to help themselves. Food, seed, machinery, and industrial raw materials are essential for survival, and are so recognized under the terms of emergency aid already granted and in prospect. At the same time there is an insistent demand throughout the world for books, which are tools of reconstruction in as real a sense as material equipment. United States educational, technical, agricultural, and scientific books are desperately needed, and can carry to other countries the practical knowledge essential to their rehabilitation.

Books reflect the culture and ideals of a people, and we believe it is essential to make an adequate picture of American democracy available to all countries with which we will have close association in the future. We submit that the picture is not adequate unless the lasting record, which exists only in books, is available to them.

For both practical and informational reasons, therefore, we believe that books play a major part in world reconstruction and in American foreign relations, though as commodities their bulk and dollar value are negligible compared with other materials in foreign trade.

At the conclusion of active hostilities, when nations had an opportunity to take a long view of their requirements, provision was made for the acquisition of books. As postwar problems have deepened, the day-to-day requirements of food and raw materials have forced many countries to ignore long-range plans in their desperate concern with problems of the moment. The acquisition of books, even those of the most positive practical value, has been hindered more and more by restrictions. The countries most needing our assistance, not only in short-term items such as flour and clothing but in long-term items such as books and lathes, are almost completely unable to obtain our books because of their need for the

*University of Chicago Press dissenting.

immediate necessities of existence. These are the so-called "soft currency" countries where there are often no dollars for book purchases, and where the American idea is usually available only through radio programs heard by the limited few with adequate receiving sets. In such countries, both within and without the "Iron Curtain," Russian books in many languages, including English, are found in great quantities. The distribution of books, not only in Europe but also in Asia and Latin America, is obviously part of Russian policy. The result is that the Russian story is available to the reading public, with all the implications which that story may have for us, and that our story, for the most part, is not available to those people who most want to know it and who can most profit by it.

Before the war, Germany was acutely aware of the fact that a language to some degree carries its own ideology, and even more acutely aware that books are the ideal instruments of ideological and commercial penetration. The Nazi regime saw to it that scientific and technical books in German were distributed everywhere. For great sections of the world, German represented a second language of education and technology.

At the close of the war, many nations were prepared to substitute English for German as their second language. In Holland for instance, there was a strong movement to displace German as a language of instruction in the sciences and in schools of higher education, thus giving the opportunity to replace German with English. Great Britain has understood this. The phrase "trade follows the book" originated in England, and, within the limits of great shortages of materials and lack of plant capacity, Great Britain has done her best to see that the English language has had a fair competitive chance in the postwar world.

Statistical data furnished by our government clearly reveal that between two wars less than 3 per cent of the total book production of the United States was shipped abroad, while British figures indicate that in the same period Great Britain exported 30 per cent of her book production. The foregoing relationships have not materially changed in the present postwar period. But England alone, because of her shortages, is in no way able to fill the void caused by the complete cessation of German export publishing and the disruption of normal publishing activity throughout Europe. The Argentine scientist and the Dutch engineer, who once looked to Leipzig for their reference works, now look to the United States as the leader in technical literature. At present they look in vain, because their governments have not been able to allocate a sufficient number of dollars for the purchase of American books.

In virtually all countries of the world, acquisition of American books has been prevented by the lack of dollar exchange at the very moment when these books are most desperately needed. This is true of England and the Commonwealth, Continental Europe, Latin America, China and other areas. As dollar exchange has run out, the various governments have imposed controls which limit the flow of materials from the United States. In the case of books, these regulations take different forms and have different effects.

In Germany and Japan, import of books through normal channels is contrary to military regulations, a situation receiving insufficient attention. The peoples in these countries are eager to know about the United States and to discover how our American civilization functions. They wish to utilize our educational, medical, professional, technical, and cultural books for the re-education of their peoples. In line with this desire, the Army maintains Information Centers containing a limited selection of books in many of the principal cities of the occupied areas; to be truly effective, all such projects must be tremendously increased in scope.

The Reorientation Branch of the Civil Affairs Division, Department of the Army, through its procurement agent, the Infantry Journal, has secured the translation rights of 440 American titles for Germany and Austria, and approximately 100 titles for Japan and Korea. Despite this sizable backlog of titles secured, it has been possible to have published to date only 35 titles in Germany, 10 in Austria, and none in Japan and Korea.

The libraries of the United States Information Service are not now sufficiently sup-

plied with books to take care of reference and circulation needs.

For the fiscal year 1947-1948, the Department of State made available about $40,000 for the purchase of books. The figure requested for 1948 is reported to be $250,000. While the sum is perhaps sufficient for the annual replenishment of the 80 U.S.I.S. Libraries now planned, it should be made a matter of record that none of the Libraries has a collection of books in any way adequate to merit being called a library. To increase the collections to requisite size, 600,000 volumes would be required, involving a capital outlay, at present prices, of not less than $3,000,000.

In 1946 the book publishing industry produced an estimated total sales volume of $350,000,000, of which only $19,000,000, or 6 per cent, represented export sales. The percentage, while of some value as a contribution to the stability of employment in the industry, is not so large as to represent a major factor in book publishing. Many publishers are therefore frankly uninterested in the purely business aspects of foreign trade, and have engaged in it from a sense of obligation in view of the world wide need for American books. Such efforts on the part of the industry cannot meet with a real measure of success until publishers are placed in a far better position to fulfill the demand.

The book industry of the United States, represented by the major associations mentioned above, respectfully submits the following recommendations to the Government as a means of strengthening permanently the long-range policy of world rehabilitation and national self-defense.

We recommend to the Government:

1. That foreign nations, in so far as possible, be enabled to secure those informational, educational, scientific, and technical books which are of value to the education and economy of the individual country;

that the word "informational" be broadly interpreted to include books which give an adequate picture of American life, American achievement, and American habits of thought and action;

that each country be free to stipulate those books which it wants for purposes of rehabilitation, and that, whenever possible, the actual transactions take place through the normal channels of commercial intercourse.

2. That most careful consideration be given to the lasting values of the United States Information Service Libraries; that a long-term program be worked out in consultation with the publishing industry and library services, with a view to determining the sum of money properly expendable for the future effectiveness of those libraries in giving access to American thought.

3. That steps be taken to broaden the re-education program by permitting interchange of library materials with the occupied areas, in such a way that books and translations of books can become available to the civilian populations of those areas;

that steps be taken to expedite the publication of translations of works of American origin in the occupied countries, and to make provision through the Department of the Army or other authorized agencies for their distribution; and further,

that more adequate attention be given to the problem of education in the occupied areas and due recognition be given to the contribution books can make to the building of new generations.

4. That, as a part of any program involving books, adequate information be supplied to consular officers, commercial attaches, and other interested personnel concerning the desirability of commerce in books, the complexities of book distribution outside the United States, and the great value of assisting educators and others abroad in acquiring informational books and materials of American origin.

5. That the United States, in cooperation with other countries through the trade agreements program and the proposed International Trade Organization, press for the reduction of governmental trade barriers hampering the free flow of books.

6. That a commission, including adequate representation of the book industry, be formed to study the means of implementing any legislation touching on the communications problem, and that the Government avail itself of the facilities of the American Book Publishers Council, the American Textbook Publishers Institute, and the Association of American University Presses in drafting programs involving the use abroad of books of American origin.